

Remarks With King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia Following a Meeting With Gulf Cooperation Council Leaders in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
April 21, 2016

King Salman. Mr. President, on behalf of my brothers, the leaders of the GCC countries, and on my personal behalf, I'd like to thank you for attending this constructive and fruitful summit, which will contribute to enhancing the consultation and cooperation between the GCC countries and the United States.

I commend the constructive discussions and the points reached. I would like to emphasize the keenness and commitment of the GCC countries to develop the historical and strategic relations between our respective countries and the United States of America to serve our mutual interest as well as the security and peace of the region and the world.

We wish you all health and happiness, and we wish our countries and peoples security, stability, and prosperity.

President Obama. Well, thank you very much, Your Majesty.

Once again, I want to thank His Majesty and the Government and people of Saudi Arabia for their hospitality, as well as Secretary General Zayani and all of our GCC countries for another successful summit.

I just want to make a brief comment on what we've accomplished. Last year, at our summit at Camp David, we agreed to build an even stronger partnership between our nations. We already had strong bilateral relations and, collectively, had a shared vision of peace and prosperity in the region. But we felt that we could do more, given the new challenges that had arisen.

Today we reviewed the important progress that we've made together. I reaffirmed the policy of the United States to use all elements of our power to secure our core interests in the Gulf region and to deter and confront external aggression against our allies and our partners. And we reached a common vision on how to move forward together in key areas.

We remain united in our fight to destroy ISIL, or Daesh, which is a threat to all of us. And the United States will help our GCC partners ensure that their special operations forces are interoperable, and GCC nations will continue to increase their contributions to the fight against ISIL and the coalition that we've formed. We'll continue to offer support to Iraq as it liberates and stabilizes towns and cities from ISIL control, and we'll remain leading donors of humanitarian aid to the peoples of Syria and Iraq who have suffered so much.

We agreed to continue working closely to deescalate and resolve regional conflicts. In Syria, the cessation of hostilities is obviously under tremendous strain, including continued violations by the Asad regime. This violence is yet another reminder that there's only one way to end this civil war, as our GCC partners agree: a transitional governing body, a new Constitution with free elections, including a transition away from Asad.

With regard to Yemen, we urged all parties to abide by the cessation of hostilities so that humanitarian aid can be reached to the Yemeni people and the peace process can proceed. With regard to Libya, we agreed to keep building support for the new national unity Government.

Given the ongoing threats in the region, the United States will continue to increase our security cooperation with our GCC partners, including helping them improve their own capacity to defend themselves.

And I thanked our GCC partners for their support of the comprehensive deal that has now cut off every single one of Iran's pathways to a nuclear weapon. That makes the region safer. We'll remain vigilant to ensure that Iran fulfills its commitments, just as we will fulfill ours.

Even with the nuclear deal, we recognize collectively that we continue to have serious concerns about Iranian behavior. Our nations committed to continuing to interdict illegal Iranian arms shipments in the region, impose costs on Iran for its ballistic missile program, and oppose Iran's destabilizing activities in the region.

At the same time, as I said at Camp David last year, none of our nations have an interest in conflict with Iran. We welcome an Iran that plays a responsible role in the region, one that takes concrete, practical steps to build trust and resolve its differences with its neighbors by peaceful means and abides by international rules and norms.

And finally, even as these summits focus on security issues, it remains the case that true and lasting security also depends on governance and an economy that serves all its citizens and respects universal human rights. And with this in mind, the United States and the GCC will launch a new high-level economic dialogue with a focus on adjusting to lower oil prices, increasing our economic ties, and supporting GCC reforms as they work to provide jobs and opportunities to their young people and all of their citizens.

So again, I want to thank His Majesty and all of our GCC partners for this very successful summit. When we look back on the past year, a lot has gotten done. I'm confident that a year from now we will be able to say that because of these actions, all of our nations are more peaceful and more secure and more prosperous. And it underscores the enduring friendship and partnership between the United States and the countries that are represented around this table.

Thank you for your hospitality.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:55 p.m. in Conference Hall 1 at Diriyah Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Abdul Latif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Secretary General, Gulf Cooperation Council; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, also known as Daesh. King Salman spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Saudi Arabia, King Salman.

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Names: Asad, Bashar al-; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King; Zayani, Abdul Latif bin Rashid Al.

Subjects: Iran : International diplomatic efforts; Iran : Nuclear program, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; Iraq : U.S. assistance; Libya : Political unrest and violence; Middle East : Gulf Cooperation Council; Middle East : Human rights issues; Saudi Arabia : King; Saudi Arabia : President Obama's visit; Saudi Arabia : Relations with U.S.; Syria : Civil war and sectarian

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